

Apex finds 3rd time's a charm

Cougars' Vedock earns MVP title

Javier Serna, Staff Writer

GREENSBORO - It took three tries, but Apex got the better of East Chapel Hill when it mattered most.

The Cougars put distance between themselves and the Wildcats for a 9-5 win in the N.C. High School Women's Lacrosse Association state championship.

The Cougars lost by a single goal in both of this season's earlier meetings.

"We were definitely ready to beat them," Apex coach Jessica Trombley said.

But it was the Wildcats who drew first blood -- literally -- in the opening seconds.

Play was stopped, and Apex sophomore midfielder Sarah Fellows was on the ground after apparently being hit in the face with a stick.

Bandaged, Fellows returned later to make key plays.

But not before East Chapel Hill senior Sara Yusko scored the game's first goal, assisted by senior Taylor Raczkowski, after just over a minute of play.

"It shook us up a little bit, but we were able to get over it," Trombley said.

Less than a minute later, East Chapel Hill had another scoring opportunity. But when the ball was loose behind the net, Apex junior Sasha Vedock grabbed the ball and cleared the field, scoring the first of three first-half goals en route to the game's most valuable player award.

"She's so quick," said Trombley. "She hustles 100 percent of the game."

East Chapel Hill junior I-Wah Chang scored to give the Wildcats a 2-1 lead, but Vedock countered with two more quick goals, the first just 21 seconds after Chang's.

Fellows, returning after her injury, then scored, but, with more than three minutes left in the first half, Wildcats junior Casey Moran responded to bring her team to a point down, 4-3 at halftime.

East Chapel Hill sophomore Chloe Edgerton tied the score early in the second half, but that was as close as the Wildcats got.

Apex senior Allison Faulhaber and junior Lisa Cook each then scored two goals.

Cook's second goal was perfectly executed. Senior JoEllen Billotte, who had circled behind the net, fed the ball to Cook at just the right time to catch the goalkeeper off guard.

Runner-up MVP Fellows put the cap on the nine-goal Cougars cause, scoring her second goal with about eight minutes left.

"It got to a point where their hearts and minds were there, but their bodies weren't," East Chapel Hill coach Liz MacNabb said.

Staff writer Javier Serna can be reached at 836-4953 or javier.serna@newsobserver.com.